

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7627

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UK IR PEPR

SUBJ: IRAN-BRITISH RELATIONS: VISIT TO IRAN OF UK DEFMIN
MULLEY

REF: TEHRAN 1621 (NOTAL), TEHRAN 1812 (NOTAL)

1. UK SECSTATE FOR DEFENSE FRED MULLEY VISITED IRAN OVER EASTER PARLIAMENTARY RECESS LAST WEEKEND. MULLEY HAD AUDIENCE WITH SHAH, AND ALSO MET WITH MINISTER OF COURT HOVEYDA, FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY, MOW GENERAL AZIMI AND CHIEF, SUPREME COMMANDER'S STAFF GENERAL AZHARI. UK EMBASSY TELLS US VISIT HAD NO SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE, BUT NOTED THAT MULLEY HAD NEVER BEEN TO IRAN AND PREVIOUS VISIT BY FORMER DEFMIN ROY MASON WAS PERHAPS A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO. COMMENT: WE ASSUME THAT VISIT WAS PART OF HMG EFFORT TO RESTORE IRAN-BRITISH RELATIONS THAT SUFFERED WRENCH RECENTLY AS RESULT BBC AND BRITISH PRESS TREATMENT OF IRAN WHICH CONSIDERABLY EXERCISED SHAH (REFTELS.) END

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COMMENT.

2. MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENT OF MULLEY VISIT WAS STATEMENT HE ISSUED ON HIS DEPARTURE MARCH 27. STATEMENT UNDERSCORES GREAT IMPORTANCE UK ATTACHES TO FRIENDSHIPS IN THIS AREA, PARTICULARLY NOTING BRITISH QUOTE VERY CLOSE AND LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP WITH

IRAN END QUOTE. STATEMENT ALSO PAYS HIGH TRIBUTE TO SHAH'S STATESMANSHIP, WISDOM AND LEADERSHIP, AND PRAISES IRAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN THIS REGION.

3. FOLLOWING ISSUANCE OF STATEMENT MULLEY HELD PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED FULL SUPPORT FOR IRAN'S ARMS BUILDUP QUOTE AS A NECESSARY DETERRENT TO THE INCREASED THREATS TO THE PERSIAN GULF AREA END QUOTE. MULLEY ASSERTED THAT QUOTE IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE SUFFICIENT MILITARY CAPABILITY TO DETER ANY POSSIBLE AGGRESSION END QUOTE. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOTED MARCH 28 NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY STORY UNDER HEADLINE QUOTE UK DEFENCE SECRETARY SUPPORTS IRAN'S ARMS INCREASE END QUOTE REPORTED BY FBIS HIGHLIGHTING ALL THESE MULLEY POINTS. END COMMENT.

4. FINALLY, WE UNDERSTAND THAT MULLEY ALSO EXPLORED WHETHER THERE ANY LIFE LEFT FOR BRITISH WITH RESPECT TO IRANIAN AIM TO ACQUIRE FRIGATES, AND FOUND THAT THERE WAS NONE.

SULLIVAN

NOTE BY OC/T: DISSEMINATION COORDINATED WITH S/S-O, ROBINSON.

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